

Forsaken

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Summary: This is a story based on the views of a Covenant Hunter in the war against Earth. I'm back! I have 18 updated, and will try to get the next up soon. So there you have it! RR.

1. Salvation

I do not own Halo (sobs)

And now, I humbly bring to you, "Forsaken".

High Charity's dull lighting never suited me. I was fit for battle, the bulldozer of the Armada. And yet, even as I walk this long hallway, I wonder what it would seem to the others, using cunning and tactics, what my purpose on the battlefield would be other than to serve as a massive shield.

I was jarred from my thoughts as my current partner strode up beside me. We were fighting a war that would ultimately be for nothing once the Hierarchs led us along the path of salvation. And we, the mighty Hunters, were nothing more than battering rams to the Elites, Jackals, etc. We were to serve as equipment, not soldiers. Hunters cannot communicate as other Covenant can, and so we can only speak of these matters among our own kind.

But this wasn't the time. My partner and I sighted the Phantom at the end of the platform. "Today, we shall fight; possibly die, in the name of the Great Journey, my brother." My Hunter partner said. And he was correct, the latter of the options more probable. "We shall battle," I replied, "to fulfill our sacred oath to the Covenant, even to our dying breath." And with those words, we boarded the Phantom. Indeed, ours is a forsaken race to the Covenant. But our servitude shall be rewarded in the end.

End of first chapter. I shall right another, should I get at least 5 nice reviews. So get out there and R&R DAMNIT! .

2. Envoy

I do not own the Halo, but if I did, there'd be a lot more interactive stuff.

Chapter 2, "Envoy of the Beginning".

It was time. Our Phantom descended upon the unsuspecting brigade of humans that was our first target. "To arms, my brothers, for we shall be the first step in the conquest of this planet." Our commander barked. We readied indeed, for nearly thirty Earthlings waited in anticipation and anxiety. My partner and I were the last off before the ship began scouting the area for hidden contacts. "I am eager to test the resolve of these humans.", my partner voiced.

"As am I. We shall finally witness the force that has put our most powerful capital ships at bay." I replied.

The air was different here. The Grunts could actually smell the humans. The Jackals were first in line for battle, to shield the Elites. We were last in the ranks. We would come in and "clean house", they said. And it was my partner, Xercs, who first spotted an enemy sniper on the roof top above us. He immediately scrambled into battle position and fired his fuel rod cannon. Unfortunately, the sniper had seen him and fled. The Jackals heard the cry first, the human war cry that ambushed us from front and back.

It was now that we were flanked. Two Elites fell and Xercs fired into the onslaught that advanced from the front. Half their lines toppled over. Grunts shot crystalline needles and overcharged plasma bolts to the flanking force. I suddenly felt the rush of battle in my blood, and matter prevailed over mind. I unconsciously charged into the latter of the platoons and crippled several with a blow of my shield. I point-blanked the first human I saw and smashed into the remainder with a fury like no other.

And then, it finally came down on us. In the smoke, we saw the outline of one more. It was him, he who had escaped our greatest fleet, annihilated our forces, single-handedly crushed the Flood, and destroyed the sacred ring Halo. It was the Demon: the Master Chief. The Elites, in a blind rage, charged him with all their might. It wasn't good enough. He swung behind, and smashed into their backbones. They fell to their knees, and then dropped to the ruined ground with a sickening _thud_. "Klez, charge him! Blast him! ANYTHING!" Xercs screamed in our language.

I was the first to fire on the demon of legend. He dodged and took cover under a steel platform that had fallen from Xercs's earlier attempt at the sniper. Xercs attempted to maneuver around the platform but was too large to hunch over enough and fire into the gap. So we resorted to what we do best: break stuff. We pounded down until there was only a one ft. gap, too small for the demon to fit. Elites threw a barrage of plasma grenades inside, which detonated with a satisfying crack of the metal.

A Grunt screamed in fear.

A cliffhanger, no? I hope to get more good reviews. Thanks to those that did! More R&R, more story to satisfy you. So keep it goin!

3. The End of the Beginning

Ah, thank you kind ppl, for your nice reviews. And now, on with the story!

Chapter 3, "The End of the Beginning".

A Grunt screamed in fear. The Commander went to investigate, and was immediately petrified. Impossible! It was him! He had escaped! Upon investigation, he had wedged a hole in the opposite side of the platform before the grenades could detonate. He struck down the Commander and proceeded to throw a fragmentation grenade into our crowd. "SCATTER!" an Elite screamed. Of course, Xercs and I just stood there. It blew, but didn't faze us. However, the Demon's next crime did. And would be his last.

Xercs dropped to the shattered earth, shot through the neck by the Demon's pistol. "Bâ€|brotherâ€|a-avenge me. Pleaseâ€|" were his last words. He dropped, stomach-first to the ground. I watched, stunned. It couldnt be true. Xercs was dead. Dead by the Demons hand. I lost all thought in a fury that swept through me like the fires of Reach. I charged, charged with all my might. I despised the Demon, with every fiber of my being. I crashed him aside. He had actually fallen. This was it! The fall of the legendary Master Chief! By my rage. It wouldnt be so.

The Phantom rounded the corner, ready to pick us up. No, not now, not at this glorious moment. I would be the one to spill this monsters blood. And nothing, not even the Hierarchs, would make it otherwise. Except for that was the case. The Earthling vessel _Inamberclad_ was preparing to strike our capital ship. We were being called back to escape via SlipSpace. I had no choice. I was forced to leave Xercss lifeless corpse on the scorched rock and metal. We boarded the Phantom, and made our way to the Prophet of Regrets ship.

We, at the time, didnt know that we were on a much more dangerous mission. As I boarded the craft, I saw the form of what would be my new partner. Andâ€|another?! They had expected us to die. Both of us. Either way, I was already on deck, so we set off. "After we clear SlipSpace, well be landing on High Charity. Klez, you will report to Tarturus. Understood?" the Commander voiced over the com. "Yes, sir" I replied, but wondered, why to Tarturus? We entered the launch bay of the cruiser, and the SlipSpace vortex opened before us.

The Demon, you ask? He had been taken by one of the humans "Pelican" aircraft. The Phantom had fired on it, and punctured it in a few places. But it escaped, the Master Chief in hand. I was left with nothing, and forced to retreat on command of our leader. And now, I was perplexed by my appointment with the Chieftain of the Brutes. This would be beginning of our new quest.

Another quickly-written but well plotted chapter. Enjoy! DO IT!

4. Great Journey

Hello again. Next Chapter. R&R OR DIE!

Chapter 4: "The Start of the Great Journey".

Once again, I walk the halls of the Holy City. This is the Ninth Age of Reclamation. Tarturus, the Chieftain of the Brutes. Why am I meeting him? He is the voice of the Prophets now, and I have begun to see a slow-paced exchange of power between the Elites and the Brutes. For me to have a confrontation with him, means that the Prophets have something in mind. Now near is the Inner Sanctum of the Hierarchs. This shall be the beginning of my new life.

And yet, my mind flashes back to Xerxes. He received an end any warrior could ask for; he died fighting for something he believed in. But was his death inevitable? Could I, or the others, done something to prevent his early passing? And did he die for the right cause? NO! I mustn't think that! That is heresy! isn't it? The Prophets have told us not to question their word, for they speak of a faith that they have followed for eons. A faith, which has resulted in nothing but the loss of lives. The sacred ring Halo is no more, and our faith goes unrewarded.

"Halt!" the lead Brute shouted. I woke up from my thoughts. There was an entire pack, and upon inspection, I found I had stumbled into the Inner Sanctum. What! what is this? Brutes stand in the glowing red-orange armor of the Honor Guard! Elites walk past, with puzzled and disappointed faces adorned. I stood, confused. "Why? I have been summoned here by Tarturus." I replied. "Indeed, but there is a meeting going on right now. A meeting that cannot be interrupted even by the likes of the Chieftain." it growled back at me.

Next down the hall was the Commander. His expression was of anger and confusion. "Unbelievable. The Hierarchs have recommissioned the Guard. The Elites can "No longer guarantee the safety of the Prophets". Go ahead, Tarturus is waiting." He muttered the last part. I entered the Sanctum and was motioned over to a side door. I caught a glimpse of him, the Arbiter. His life was forfeit, but I remembered his leadership before the Halo incident. He conversed with Truth and Mercy about a Sacred Icon. Either way, I met Tarturus next.

"Welcome, Hunter" the gray Brute greeted as I walked in, "I suppose you know why you're here." "No, I don't. I only know that it must be of great importance." I flatly replied. "Figures. You have been summoned to lead the Hunters that will be accompanying the Commander and the Arbiter to Halo." H-Halo?! "Impossible! Halo is nothing more than ruins!" I shouted. Halo had been destroyed by the Demon. We had witnessed it from the city. "You obviously weren't paying attention to the window in the other room." He bellowed. I hurried outside.

And there it was. Halo.

Interesting. Or not. Depends on your tastes. Nonetheless, R&R. And give suggestions, if you want.

5. The Sacred Icon

I don't own the magnificent Halo. GIVE ME HALO, BILL GATES!

Chapter 5, "The Sacred Icon".

I was used to the interior of the Phantom, but this was an unsettling time. We were being transported to Halo. Saying that doesn't feel right. Halo was destroyed by the Demon. And here we were, en route to it. For what seemed like the first time in ages, our faith was rewarded. There's tremendous morale among the Elites. I don't blame them. This is their chance to redeem themselves. And it was the mighty Hunters' chance to prove our worth to the Covenant. We shall grind all who stand in our way to dust! Halo shall propel all who are worthy along the path of glorious salvation! And nothing, the Humans, the Flood, shall stop the Great Journey from becoming a reality!

We landed. When I exited the craft, I have to be honest. I was blinded by the sheer majesty, the beautiful environment that encompassed the holy ring. Forerunners be praised, this was one of the most awe-inspiring locations in the Galaxy. We were dropped off in a lush, thick forest filled with "pines" and "oaks". A NAV-point showed on our HUD, indicating our first target. We set off, and wandered toward the objective for what seemed like hours. We came upon it. It was a massive crystal-clear lake with numerous tower clusters scattered about it. Our target was the closest, about a kilometer away.

Our pack soon arrived at the first structure. In the distance was the massive cruiser that had transported us here from High Charity. "Prepare yourselves. We can't risk any mistakes! The Prophets will have our hides." The Commander ordered. "Hunters, you will be lifted to the central tower cluster. There, you will perform the greatest task." He said in a very serious tone. "You are to stand as a Vanguard for the Prophet of Regret as he delivers his sermon!" he shouted. We were stunned. We hadn't even known the Prophet was here. By the Rings, this was perfect!

It was never that easy. Almost immediately after this statement, a sharp crack came over the COM. "He's here, he's here! All is lost-" a Grunt screamed before the COM went dead. ARGHH! The Demon! A feeling of fleeting glory washed over me. I had been given a second chance to cut him down. I had competition, of course (The Elites were going to go on a rampage at this news), but I would make sure I finished it. I would fulfill Xercss dying wish and slay him. The Prophets will would actually be done by MY hand. Not even the Arbiter would stop my new crusade.

My partners, Kagg, Miyuki, and Karn were already prepared for battle. The Phantom rounded back to the cluster and picked us up. It was a matter of moments that seemed like an eternity before we arrived at our destination. 4 Honor Guards greeted us. "Take these. They'll come in handy." They grumbled. They handed us fuel rods for our cannons. "We have fuel rods already. What are these for?" Miyuki asked. "Just take them. It is the Holy One's orders." He said. We couldn't argue with that.

"All units! Fire at will!!!" the Commander screamed over the COM. All we could do was assume the worst.

THANK YOU! I truly can't thank you enough. My faith in the fic is renewed. More shall follow! Nearly daily!

MWAHAHAHAHAHAHA! I don't know why I'm laughing. You know I no own, but we should all get a share, yknow?

Chapter 6, "The Prophet of Regret".

We were bored. All we could do was sit around, for the Demon could not penetrate an armada of Elites, Jackals, and Grunts, not to mention Kagg and Miyuki. They were deployed to guard the dock of the ferry to the second tower cluster. Karn and I were stationed on the central tower, far away from all the action. I passed the time with sleep, while Karn bossed around some of the Grunts. We can only roar at them, so we enforce our authority by knocking them around a little. This was the MOST boring job a warrior could attain.

"All units, open fire!" the Commander screamed over the COM. We could only assume the worst: he had arrived already—wait. How?! When we jumped from the city, we had left them behind. The only way they could—have followed us—was—so that's how they did it. They got within range of the SlipSpace vortex to follow through. The tenacity of these humans was grinding down on all of the Covenant's nerves. The COM opened. "We've got trouble here," Miyuki called over the COM, "and it's headed your way." "How close is the Demon?!" I yelled. "Cool it, Klez. He's about to the dock. Kagg and I are on route there now." He replied. My mind wrenched as I remembered Xerxes, and what might happen to the others.

We stood in place for hours on end, when the COM reopened. It was filled with static, but we heard this much from the Commander: "All of our forces on cluster one -- been neutralized. Awaiting orders—stand by—" silence filled and the COM went dead. "Vile human scum!" Karn shouted. "We should have burned them all when we had the chance." I responded. The COM revived, filled with the screams of Grunts. "The Grunts have gone mad with fear!" an Elite roared. "The Jackals are trying to marshal them, but they're firing on anything that moves. The Master Chief has taken advantage of this and bypassed us. Ready yourselves for combat, Hunters!" the COM flicked off. This was our chance. My chance.

Legions of Honor Guards filed across the hall and into position on the inner hallway that led outside. The ferry was on its way here. We would kill the Master Chief or die trying. Well, they might die, but I wouldn't. Not until I had slain him. The ferry stopped; I became nervous that the Demon would be eliminated before he got here. I shook it off. He wouldn't die by the hand of two Elites. The ferry moved again, sailing through the pristine lake. It almost gave you a feeling of the calm before the storm. He had "Marines" with him, and they'd be looking to spill plenty of blood before they went down. We had the upper hand, though. We were confident this time.

And now, it was time to see just how bountiful our good fortune would be.

For those of you looking for ACTION, the next chapter will be made up of the basics: Bone-cracking, head-bashing, and plasma grenade sticking goodness!!

Time to get to what any reader likes: ACTION! DESTRUCTION! Hahahaha, you ppl are in for a treat this chap.!

Chapter 7, "A Warrior's Duel".

This was it. I was anxious, and I was going to finish it here and now! The ferry lurched to a stop at the dock. But nothing happened. Two Grunts went to inspect the vessel, and surprisingly returned intact. "What is this?!" Karn mumbled, and cursed the humans. "Wait," I said, "open fire on the beams." "Why?" Karn responded. "Just fire!" I yelled. He stood there puzzled for a moment, and fired on the support beam in the middle. Something moved. "They're in there, all right. Fire at will!" I ordered. "They just stood, and stared at me. "What're you all waiting for?! Fire!" I shouted. They all dropped.

Snipers! My warriors fell to the rock, necks each punctured by a hole. "It's over. Take us to the Prophet, and you might live." The Master Chief said, appearing from the ferry. "Not if my life depended on it, Demon!" I replied. "It does. Now do it." He sternly demanded. "I'd rather die. Reveal yourselves!!" I screamed. A legion of Honor Guards stormed out of the tower, along with elite Grunts, fifteen Jackals, and ten Elites. The Demon's forces appeared as well: 4 marines, armed with "shotguns", and "SMG's". "You can't defeat us with these, Demon." I said. "You're right. They won't. But this will." And with that, he pulled out a large double-barreled gun with rounded bullets.

"That won't help." I said to him, but he didnt flinch. "You don't know what it does yet. The best part's next." He said, a bit of smugness in his voice. He hefted it onto his shoulder, and fired. It slammed into the back of Elites with a sonic boom. Powerful enough to force me back. The Elites lie there, dead. "Unholy fiend, you will pay for this with blood!!!" I yelled at him, and fired my cannon. It struck him in the side, making his shields flash an iridescent yellow-white. "FIRE! Slay him! At all costs!" I ordered in sheer rage.

I would watch him die. I would savor the moment. Of course, it wasn't meant to be, because my faith was again forsaken by a sickening CRACK in the rock. My warriors fell, and once again I was alone. The Master Chief advanced toward me. "One more chance. Take us to the Prophet." He ordered. "Us? HA! Look, for you will se that you too are alone." I grumbled in my language. He turned to see none of his companions, but instead two Phantoms, turrets aglow. "What the-"he stood there, dumbfounded. "You were too caught up in slaughtering my men that you didn't even realize yours were being cut down." He turned, and shot me in the neck with a pistol he'd drawn in a blur. My vision darkened, and I fell.

He didn't know the resilience of a mighty Hunter, and this is where the duel began. "Demon, stand and fight. I shall test your mettle in a fight to the death. To avenge my comrades and to restore glory to our race." To show that I would fight a fair battle, I disengaged my massive shield and picked up the ceremonial Energy Sword that had fallen from an Honor Guard in the earlier scuffle. He turned, seemingly surprised by both my survival and my act. "This should be fun for awhile." He flatly commented, and got his pistol out. I charged him, and he stumbled over. He regained balance and shot me in the back. I flinched, but stood. "Pathetic." I pointed out to his

relatively weak pistol. "That won't kill me-"I realized the error I had just made, but he said or did nothing. He through down the pistol and jumped me. I hadn't expected this. He flung behind me and tried to strangle me/stab me in the back with an E. S. I did the next part with satisfaction: I charged back-first into the stone wall and broke his grip. I reached around, ripped him off my back, and threw him to the ground. I proceeded to pummel him with my cannon, but he slipped out of my grip.

We hand locked, and that gave me the upper hand. I bent him back, nearly snapping his wrists into pieces. He picked up his pistol and bashed me in the head. I became disoriented. He swung behind again, and fired four shots into my back and neck. I got up, broken physically, and with the last of my strength, I picked up my shield and swung. It impacted with the side of his head, and he fell back. All the while, I wondered what Karn had to be doing. This only lasted a moment, for it was back to battle; but he was gone! I slammed my fists to the ground, and my entire body followed. He'd escaped. I was alone as I slipped into unconsciousness. I had lost the battle, maybe. We would meet again.

It strays from the game very much a little. But it has the promised action! DEAL WITH IT!

8. Domino Effect

The ACTION doesn't stop last chapter! It's time for our favorite Hunter to witness the first main battle: Master Chief vs. Prophet of Regret! And this will be the start of a series of longer, more descriptive chapters. Enjoy! Who am I kidding; you have no choice!

Chapter 8, "The Domino Effect".

I awoke about an hour later. I was in a daze, between getting my bearings and the earlier conflict. I tried to stand, but an intense pain surged through me. 'Blasted Demon, I cursed, He was in my grasp! I must set out. He will find the Prophet shortly. I stood, ignoring the pain. "Klez!" Karn called. "Karn, what in the name of the Rings are you doing?!" I rambled. "The Demon nearly killed me! And you were hiding, weren't you?!" "Yes." Was that all he could manage? "Get up. There's much to do and we've hardly any time." I ordered. He said nothing but followed. He was no doubt ashamed. I would be too, had I cowered in fear from the Master Chief. All along the way out we saw the post-carnage of the Demon's rampage. Dead Grunts and Elites littered the ground, already decaying. The once brown-orange rock was stained purple and blue. We found the exit, and stepped into the artificial atmosphere of Delta Halo. The sapphire-blue lake unfolded before us, and we discovered a pack of cowering Grunts aboard the ferry. "You are not dead? What happened?" "The Demon he spared us!" they squealed with both fear and excitement. "You hid, didnt you?" I asked. "No! But we told him something" one of them replied. "FOOLS! You told him where to find the Holy One?! I should kill you right now!!" I yelled, enraged and disappointed. "Please, no! Well take you to him!" they bargained. "Very well then." Karn replied.

"If you know what's good for you Karn, you'll keep your words to yourself." I snapped. He looked taken aback, and fell silent. I had

lost all respect for him. Now was the time to put the Demon in his place.

The whole trip on the steel ferry, everyone was silent (what words can forge shattered pride?). We arrived at the final tower, and could already see the war path of the Demon. Bodies were tossed about. Andâ€¦no. Kagg lie face-down in the walkway. He movedâ€¦could he have survived the Demon. We rushed over, only to find it was an after effect of death; he had only twitched. No! I've lost anotherâ€¦no more. I swear on my oath to the Covenant, the Master Chief will not leave Halo alive! My thoughts were interrupted as an explosion sounded from inside the tower. "Let's go! Hurry!" I commanded the others. "Karn, you lead." "Why me, Klez?" "Because your life is forfeit." He turned andâ€¦fired at me?! "You little- this is heresy! Kill the heretic." I ordered the Grunts. Maddened at the attempt, they complied entirely of own will. "No! I won't take it anymore!" he suddenly bellowed, "We're dying for a forsaken cause! Open you eyes, Klez! The Prophets are using us!" he continued. "No, it is you, who has forsaken your own race. I'll see to your demise. Personally." I challenged. We disengaged shields, and stared each other down. He finally struck at me. I side stepped and tripped him (clichÃ©, sort of, but oh well) and shot him point-blank in the back with my cannon. He convulsed, and dropped. His orange blood sank into the stone. "Come, we must stop the Demon now!" I ordered to the Grunts, all the while re-fitting my shield. It was time.

We entered, and it was intact! Honor Guards were on edge, but performing their duties none-the-less. The Commander was here as well. "Hunter! Where are your partners?" The Commander plied, and I responded with this: "Two dead and I had to kill the last." He looked at me, genuinely stunned at my response, probably the latter. "Killed the last? Explain yourself." He sternly demanded, and I complied. "He fired on me, and slandered the name of the Hierarchs. I took the initiative to end his heresy." I replied, without fear of consequences. I replayed the events to the white armored Elite. When I finished, he sighed deeply. "I see. Very well then, I'll call in more warriors to kill the Demon, and-" "Wait," I cut him off, "I will kill him myself." "Are you mad?! He'd drop you where you stand!" He roared, and a few H.G.'s snickered. "I have faced him twice, and lived. I can do it again." At this, they burst out with hysterical laughter. "Yes, and I'm a Hierarch!" One of the Honor Guards joked. "Whatever he said, he's probably telling the truth." Came a voice from the shadows above. We all froze, knowing what was about to happen. "Scramble! Fall into position!" The Commander ordered. Now was my third chance, this one to be more short-lived than the others.

He weaved through us like the wind, and in a flash two Elites fell, dead. He didn't even bother with us, but instead hastened toward the Prophet's Chamber. "After him! We must stop him at all costs!" The Commander yelled. I, of course, had heard this more quietly, as I had already begun the chase. I caught up to him as he battled an Honor Guard. He was attempting to pry the Energy Sword from my comrade's hand, to no avail. I decided to take this chance and smash down on him. His shields flickered, and then faded to nothing, which left him in a compromising situation. He used me as cover from the Honor Guard, and I tried a follied swing at him with my cannon. He, with amazing strength, twisted my arm. Pain flowed through, but I ignored it as I landed a successful blow on him with my shield. I slightly cracked his armor, proving the Immortal Demon wasn't so immortal

anymore. The Commander rushed in, and he began firing on him, all the while I was pursuing him. I rounded the corner and was pleasantly greeted with a hail of bullets from his rifle. About 6 connected with my neck, decommissioning me for a few minutes. He was already on his way to the Prophet, and there was nothing I could do for the moment.

I regained movement several minutes later, to hear the doors to the chamber creek open. Blast him. I'll finish it now. I swore on my oath. These thoughts raced through my mind as I hurried to the doors. As I neared, I heard the Prophet bellowing. "Incompetent's! I'll kill it myself!" He yelled. It seemed fitting, a Prophet killing a Demon, but I would do it. I charged in, and was nearly hit by a laser, the same as mine albeit it was yellow. I got up and watched a spectacular battle. The Prophet had eliminated the Master Chief's shields and was coming in for the kill. I almost had the urge to swoop in, knock Regret away, and kill him, but I had to live with the fact that he wouldn't die by my hand. Both luckily and grim at the same time, I was wrong. The Demon used the same tactic he had used on me before: he jumped onto the Hierarch's floating throne and began beating on the Holy One! Wait—the throne is descending—NO! The Prophet of Regret was dead! "Come, we must leave! One of our Cruiser's is preparing to destroy this tower!" The Commander said. I took one last look, and left.

It would soon be the Domino Effect. The Prophet's death would trigger dissent in the Covenant's ranks. This would lead to revolution, and the fall of the Great Journey. All there was to do was watch it unfold.

The longer chapter 8! Enjoy, or don't. Wait, enjoy. You will anyway. The choice isn't yours. So do it!

9. Revolution

Greetings, readers! It's a pleasure to have you here, for it's time for the climax chapters of the story. You'll get it after the first sentence probably.

Chapter 9, "The Resolve: Revolution".

We were watching the rebellion erupt before our eyes. We had returned here to High Charity, and we got a much different greeting than we had expected. We were apprehended and interrogated about the events at the tower. What had happened to the Prophet of Regret? What of the Demon? And more. They wanted every detail; nothing could be withheld from them. They wouldn't have hesitated to beat one of us to within an inch of our lives if it would've helped. Meanwhile, the two remaining Hierarchs were in, depending on interpretation, a much worse position; they had the task of quelling the near revolution that was forming in the city. The Grunts rebel because their brethren have been slaughtered without remorse by the Drones. The Elites are arguing because of the recommissioning of the Guard. And we were rebelling for what we saw as a greater cause: the history our race had with the Covenant. We had finally learned the truth; our race hadn't joined of free will. They were "tamed". This was a travesty, and we were through with the Prophets unfulfilled promises. We would finally be able to rise up from our forsaken position and travel the Great Journey alongside the Elites. Nothing, not the Flood, not the

Hierarchs, not even the Demon could thwart our cause.

At the moment, I was leading a pack of Hunters to a meeting room on the north tower of the city. We and the Elites would make a final decision on what to do. Would we stay faithful to a lost cause, or make our own futures, led by no one but ourselves. And, for the first time since I had joined the Covenant, I know that if we banded together, we could actually accomplish our goal. We arrived at the tower, and the Elites were preparing for the meeting. The Commander had been waiting for us, and the area was set up. "Greetings, Klez. Take no offense, but why are you here?" "None taken," I replied, "but what do you mean?" He looked puzzled. "I didn't expect you to show up." He said, obviously surprised by our arrival. "We've had it with the Covenant. We're with you all the way Commander!" I proudly said. He gave a crisp salute, nothing anyone in the Covenant had ever dared to do before. "We're heading back to Halo. Are you and your squadron up for it?" he asked, less uptight than usual. "Would we not?" I answered. This would be the day we finally made a difference, for both of our races.

The meeting began. "First we must discuss how we shall deal with the Brutes. They're our only threat." The Commander stated. "Threat," one of the others said, "those vile beasts are nothing to us! We will crush them as we have all other foes!" he proclaimed, and the others roared with agreement. Just then, a stampede of Grunts flowed into our meeting area. "Ah, our other guests have arrived." An Elite mumbled. "Reporting for assignment, Commander!" they squealed in unison. "At ease. We've been waiting. The meeting just began." He said, and the meeting followed through. We discussed our plan for the Brutes, our purpose for the journey back to Halo, and how we would go about all of it in the little time we had. It lasted for three hours, and we did accomplish most of our plotting then. We were going to Halo to find out why none of the agents there had reported back. We boarded a Phantom, and the Commander and his Elites piloted Seraph fighters. We set out, to find our allies.

Instead, we found a massacre.

This is short. Sorry, readers, but I'm on a deadline for a trip, and won't be posting for a few days. I shall write as soon as possible, though!

10. Retribution

My faithful reviewers, I bid you greetings from Australia! The trip was slower than expected, but now your author has returned to his story and shall write immediately.

Chapter 10, "Retribution Doesn't Come Cheap".

We went to find our agents, who hadn't reported back. Instead, we found a massacre.

We arrived only a few minutes after we had left the city. We set out a few miles before we came unto the most horrific thing we had seen: hundreds of Elites, Grunts, and even Hunters, were strewn about the ground. We immediately ascertained that this wasn't the work of the Demon; nay, this slaughter could have only been committed by Brutes, for the bodies had been ravaged by nothing more than raw strength.

Even dead bodies hadn't been left to peace, as they were desecrated, limbs ajar from the main body. This would be the beginning of a campaign that would ultimately lead us to the most unexpected comrades we could hope for. But that will be a later part of my story. At the time, we realized this had to end- NOW. Armies of our best Elites (no pun intended) marched across the barren area of Halo known as the "Quarantine Zone", where snow constantly blanketed the ground, and conditions were so harsh and forbidding that they could only truly suit our greatest foe ever, worse in tactics and mentality than even the Humans. The path etched through the deepest canyon in the zone would lead us to our destination: the temperate climate forests of the ring, which matched the Brutes home world climate. We were on guard, though, as the dreaded place that we now treaded through was bound to be crawling with the Flood, and we couldn't risk any casualties, lest those fallen corpses come back from the grave as agents of the Flood. That would actually last longer than expected, for we were battle-free for at least a few hours. It was 0650 in the morning, when the first scream of the vile beasts echoed like the screech of a Banshee through the hollowed rock walls. We readied for the worst.

They descended upon us from above, erupted from patches of loose dirt in the ground, and converged from all sides. This entire excursion looked more like a trap now; almost as if someone had alerted them prehand to our arrival. '_I should have expected this' _I thought, '_the Brutes must have riled them in an attempt to impede anyone's progress towards their bases in the forests.' _They indeed did a good job, but we had all known this confrontation would come, and the Prophets were right about one thing: the Flood too would fail before the onslaught of our warriors. The Jackals took up routine position in shielding the Elites, while the Grunts fired on anything that moved outside of our proximity. I and nine other Hunters began firing at long-range targets. As much as we pelted them, however, they flowed into the canyon in even larger numbers; it seemed for every one, there were a hundred waiting. After hours of continuous fighting, both sides finally came to what might be considered a standstill. We were extremely low on ammunition, and their numbers were beginning to thin out. We saw this as as good as any a chance to do what we hated most: we ran from the fight. Albeit we risked our lives by staying, it shattered what we stood for to flee a battle. None-the-less, we had to perform the task at hand; slaying the Brutes, as they had done to our own. After ages of plodding through snow and sliding over the ice beds, we arrived at an opening where the ground before us stopped. We walked to its edge, and marveled at the beauty of the sight that lie before us.

The thick jungle stretched out to the horizon, until it halted at a beachfront. We couldn't just waltz in and ask the Brutes for a drink, though, so we started planning our infiltration and annihilation of their packs. We would insert a squad of Spec Ops Elites into an area not far from the primary establishment over the rigid mountains to the West, while I would take my pack of Hunters and make a distraction no one could miss. The Grunts would scout ahead into the camps surrounding the mountain and report back, if they were still in one piece. We began at 1145 hours in the morning, and from the earlier battle our forces were depleted and weary. Elites of lesser status-no, none of us were greater than each other now. We charged head-first into the forest, expecting some welcome party of beasts to ambush us, but found untouched land within. The Grunts might as well have been petrified, for despite the fact they normally waddled

around, they were taking baby steps all along the way. Our forces reached a milestone in the forest, and the wreckage of trees and brush tossed about alerted us that something had to be waiting for us. "Commander, I smell Brutes!" one of the Grunts screamed. "Positions! Don't let them get the drop on us!" he roared to us. Their hiding spots revealed, packs of Brutes sprung from the bushes and trees. "Didn't take you very long, did it?" a Brute asked, "I'm sure the first welcome party was kind enough to greet you with open arms." Another snarled. "You vile beasts shall pay for the blood you have spilled!" one of my fellow Hunters said.

An explosion erupted from behind the mountain. It appeared to have been caused by human grenades. Just another thorn in our side, for we prepared to fulfill the task at hand. A bloody battle it would be.

A cliffhanger of sorts, no? I shall update soon! For now, I bid you all Adieu!

11. HonorhoodAlliance

Welcome to chapter 11, old fans and new alike. You'll get more of what you must have been craving; that's it, ACTION, BABY! Some skulls're gonna get smashed this chap.! Hail the Immortal Hunter, NOW AND FOREVER!

Chapter 11, "And Crown thy Blood with Honorhood".

A bloody battle it would be. The pack of vile monsters before us drew their Brute Shot grenade launchers, and whatever else was at hand. My Hunters and the Elites took up position in the front, while the Grunts charged in head-first. The Brutes merely swept them aside, as if they were no threat at all. They were terribly mistaken. The Grunts began their part of the plan, though it cost most their lives; they jumped onto the Brutes, plasma grenades armed, and detonated while still hanging on to the unexpecting beasts. For the first time in ages, we actually laughed! Half a legion of Brutes had fallen to a pack of Grunts! Our laughter was short-lived, however, as the remainder berserked at the death of their comrades. "Positions, men! Don't let one survive our onslaught." The Commander ordered, and we threw ourselves to the task wholeheartedly. I fired before all others, determined to root these vermin from our memories and carry onward. I wasn't the last, of course; nine other Hunters, a squad of Elites, and our remaining but strong willed Grunts launched a barrage of plasma bolts, crystalline needles, plasma grenades, and plasma mortars flew through the air and into the rampaging Brutes dead set on killing us. None survived. In the midst of the Aftermath, a flurry of pods dropped from the sky to our position. We prepared to fight whatever came out.

The pods jettisoned their front hatches, and Elites jumped out of them. "Ha! Over so soon?!" the highest ranking Elite asked with a hint of sarcasm. He was clad in golden armor, and carried the ceremonial Energy Sword only a High Commander could wield under the Covenant set of laws. "Loud entrance, no? So much for a stealthy advance." One of our original Elites snickered. "We got company!" one of the Grunts snarled. "Drones, over the top of the mountain!" The High Commander announced much to our surprise. Drones were no threat to us, but the fact remained that they usually led packs of Brutes along their path. "With all do respect, H. Commander," I queried,

"why should we worry about a squadron of Drones?" "Don't let that small party fool you. On our Cruiser we identified an entire swarm on the other side, attempting to fight off the few Humans who remained here after the tower incident." He answered. "So that explosion was a result of Human activityâ€¦" I wondered. Then I spawned one of my most ingenious ideas yet. "Alright, gather around. I've got a plan." I called to the others. They did so, and I told them my plan: we would divide into four shock teams, designed to make guerilla hit-and-runs on the Brutes' camps. Each team would be composed of five Elites, ten Grunts, and two Hunters. We studied a suitable plan for each team to perform, and got ready for the greatest battle of our lives. Another, bloodier battle awaited my team over the mountain.

My team, consisting of another Hunter, the Commander and four other Elites and Grunts followed a tunnel dug through the mountain by the Brutes, and walked for half an hour through the winding passage. At 0230 P.M., we exited the cave at the other end, to enter a camp. And isn't that just our luck; we stood there, looking face to face at a pack of them. "How nice of you to drop in. It won't be a long stay, I can assure you." The lead beast grunted, and his fellows followed suit. "Much obliged, but we're going to have to halt that process; you'll be too dead to kill any of us!" The Commander sarcastically replied, and we engaged them. The lead Brute charged and tackled the Commander, while I dispatched several that were dumb enough to be standing in a cluster. The radiation from mine and my comrade's cannons sliced through their bare skin. At that moment, several other packs rushed into the scene, and things really intensified from there. Two jumped me and began pummeling me from all sides, and I became disoriented. I was conscious enough to take my shield to the first thing I saw, and it crushed the Brutes skull with ease. Needless to say, the others didn't take kindly to that action, and tackled me. I fell to the ground on my back. Meanwhile, the Commander was on the ground as well, pinning the Brute Captain and trying to disarm his Brute Shot. An unexpected ally came to our aid.

A flurry of Grenades flew through the air, and detonated right under the Brutes. Shrapnel pierced their already battered skin, and they all fell to the ground. "Well well well, look what we have here." The dark skinned man said, walking in as if nothing had just happened. "Human, you will die for-"an Elite started, but was interrupted. "No, stand down. We have no reason to fight them anymore." The High Commander yelled, and he and his team marched in with him. "I see we've finally come to an understandin" The Human leader said to him. "I'm Sergeant Johnson. I'm guessin this raggedy pack of Elites is yours?" he asked, with sarcasm.

"What are you doing here, Human?" I asked him, as I had learned to speak the Humans language. "My name ain't "Human", it's Johnson, and we're trying to stop those Brutes from activatin this ring," He replied, "what about you?" "Avenging the deaths of our brothers at the hands of the aforementioned." The H. Commander responded. "Seein as we're after the same goal, why don't we make up for all those years of fightin and join up?" he asked. As if on cue, another squadron of the Brutes showed up in our faces. "Positions!" the H. Commander ordered. I wasn't going to wait to get jumped; I charged into the middle of the pack and prepared to give them a piece of what had been waiting for them.

It was an exhilarating battle. I rushed them, and disengaged my

shield. I threw a barrage of both frag. and plasma grenades at them, and proceeded to cut them down with an Energy Sword. I was shot in the back with both a Carbine and a Brute Shot, and fell unconscious to the ground. I was actually dead for a few minutes, but then I remembered the Dem-â€| Master Chief. I had to learn something about him: his strength, his reasons, how he had come to be the killing machine he is. At this, I remembered Xercs, and then Karnâ€|Karn had been right, and I had slain him in cold blood. He had died in vain, by my hand. I began to question my own life, and if it was worth living. I had always thought we were dying for a good cause, but everything that had happened prior to my resignation from the Covenant was a huge lie. But I would have to think about this after I saved my new comrades. I awoke absolutely bewildered as to who and where I was, but it passed. I stood, and bumped into the Brute Captain. This more than shocked him, and I took his petrified state as a welcome opportunity to swoop in behind him and strangle him. I got in position, and snapped his neck. Another jumped, and clamped onto my back. I couldn't get him off, but Johnson jumped into the scene and crushed the beast's back with a clubbing from his rifle. Free of the burden, I picked up a pistol-and crushed the tiny firearm in my hand. Blast it. I traded the crumpled gun with a Plasma Rifle, and it too broke. Cursed small items! I was interrupted in my search for a large weapon by a bayonet in the face. "You little- how dare you strike me?!" I roared at the Brute. I turned my back to him, thrust up my spikes, and ran him through into a rock. "Damn son, that's some mighty fine work!" Johnson gave a low whistle of approval. "I'd watch my back if I were you." I said, pointing at the Brute Capt. "I got it covered." He smugly replied, all the while shooting it in the face.

A massive explosion rocked the ground beneath us. Something with tremendous power was headed our way.

End of chapter 11. Review my work! DO IT, OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES!

12. High Charity Cometh

A horrifyingly long delay, but the Immortal Hunter has returned to fascinate you with his excellent spelling and grammar (hint hint)â€|on with the chapter!

Chapter 12, "Come High Charity".

Something with tremendous power must have been headed our way.

"It's a Cruiser!" the High Commander announced. "Maybe nowâ€|weâ€|canâ€|" was all he could manage as a gravity lift opened and thousands of Brutes and Jackals filled it, all coming to the surface. "By the Rings, we can't deal with that many!" The Commander struggled. "We receiving transmission- it's the Arbiter, Commander!" one of the Grunts squealed. "Well, what are you waiting for?! Put him through!" I ordered. Static filled the COM, then, "Commander, come in!" we heard his voice break through. "Arbiter, where are you?!" the Commander inquired, but the line went dead. "Ascertain the source of that transmission!" The H. Commander ordered. "On it, chief!" our Technicians Grunt answered. "We're going to find the Arbiter, Klez. You, a pack of Grunts, and a few Elites shall stay here. I have something in mind for you." Our tactical advisor Elite said, calling

us over to a makeshift hut. Inside were scanners and monitors that displayed the location of ourselves in relation to the enemy, among other things. "We have a matter of hours of safety here as long as we keep the commotion to a minimum, so we have to figure up a plan." He said. "Whoa, wait a minute. I thought you called us over because you _had_ a plan for us already. What happened?" I asked him, a tad irritated. "Yes, wellâ€¦l-lets get on with the meeting, shall we?" he asked, obviously intimidated by me. "Klez, you'll take strategic command of Spec. Ops. Team, consisting of the group I named earlier. We'll discuss your objective first."â€¦

We slithered through the thick forest without a sound, and were on edge for even a crack of a twig. Our tracks were covered by the heavy rainfall that blanketed this region of Halo. We had encountered a pack of Jackals only minutes ago and neutralized them with ease, so we weren't taking the chance of an ambush. We stopped every so often to make sure we were clear of enemies. "Avoid all confrontation with the enemy until Guerilla Team 1 has set the stage." The H. Commander had said before we mobilized, and we stayed true to it. A single Jackal's screech could alert legions of enemies to our location. Once Guerilla Team 2 had done their part, we would perform the final act. They'd be in for a surprise all right; it would make an explosive impression on them, considering everything went as planned. "_This is Instructor 003, we confirmed Brutes on the opposite side of ridge Team Leader!_" Our Technicians Grunt alerted over a private COM channel. "_Copy that Instructor. Send in your pack and prioritize fire on the weakest ones. We'll take it from there._" I replied to him. "_Roger, Team Leader. Mobilizing in 5!_" he replied, and the channel closed. Time for G. T. 1 to do their thing.

"Prioritize fire on weakest!" Frenirn ordered to his Grunts. The Technicians Grunt may not have had much battle experience, but he remembered that Commander Klez had placed him in charge of Guerilla Team 1 for his brilliant tactics. "Ready!" his troops whispered. "On my markâ€¦FIRE!" Frenirn barked. Tens, maybe even hundreds of crystalline needles easily pierced the Jackals' armor and they dropped dead. It didn't take long for their friends to notice, however, and the Grunts were in a serious predicament; they could fight on the slim chance that Comm. Klez's force would arrive in time to save a fraction of them, fight to the death, or stay put and be torn to pieces by blind gunfire. Not an easy decision, considering that his troops were also his best friends. In a miracle that could only have been delivered by the Gods themselves, a massive blue photon laser cut straight through the advancing forces. Frenirn looked, to see Spec. Ops. Team brutalizing the enemy. Commander Klez, clad in black armor and fitted with a new cannon that fired blue photon radiation, stood amidst the chaos and ran down all opposition.

"Excellent work, Frenirn!" I commented, all the while choking the Brute Captain in my grasp. "Commander!" he said, and snapped to attention. "At ease. Your work is done, now it hinges on Guerilla Team 2 to get their job finished in time." I told him, but he stood even straighter. "No, I'm going to keep fighting them along side you, Commander! They can't beat us!" he proclaimed. And I was truly surprised, and all I could say was: "So be it, brother! We shall cut down these vile Brutes together!" I rallied, and everyone there roared in agreement. "It not over yet! Look!" a Grunt commando alerted. A pack- no, an entire legion of Jackals stormed us in the blink of an eye. We were dumbfounded, but regained our composure

quickly and engaged the fools. My new armor had been installed with a temporary cloaking field generator, but I wouldn't dream of using it; it would disgrace my very existence as a Hunter. I tore through them with a dropped Energy Sword (always conveniently handy, no?), and swept my cannon fire on the remainder.

But it was too late when I noticed a Jackal activate a beacon directed towards the Cruiser. "Stop that beacon, at all costs!" I ordered, and we fired on it. Both the beacon and the Jackal were felled, but the signal would have reached them by now. At the same time, what seemed as an earthquake rocked the ground beneath us, and the ridge several kilometers away burst into flames; it had been the Brutes primary staging center. "G. T. 2 got the job done after allâ€¦all right, as of now I'm assuming strategic command of both teams. Frenirn, I want you and your pack with me. Units 2-7 will accompany me as well. "What we going to do, Commander?" Frenirn asked. "Lock and load; we're going Chieftain hunting. Frenirn, order us a Phantom double-time. My team is heading back to High Charity for some last minute clean-up."

This is a new computer, and I only have a Trial of Word until the first, so it'll be awhile till I get the complete schiznik to write. Anyway, enjoy, and I shall bring you more as soon as Best Buy stops being a bunch of dicks! See ya!

13. Circumstances

I don't own Halo, and I should, we all should! Anyway, these will be some of the more..._ violent _chapters, but it's still ACTION, so enjoy it!

Chapter 13, "Depending On Circumstancesâ€¦".

Normally the trip to High Charity would be an uneventful and quite frankly boring trip, but when you have crossfire from Destroyers shooting to kill at each other and us, it's more than you expect from afar. "By the Rings Frenirn, why are you driving?!" I rambled at the Grunt as he swerved through an array of differentâ€¦stuffâ€¦flying through our path. "It not my fault; you can't avoid anything out here!" he replied, and I could tell I'd annoyed him. "How is the Commander faring?" I asked out T.A. Elite. "Not much better, possibly worse. He's stuck in the middle of it." he said. "Brace yourselves. Frenirn, open the hatch." I called. I expected horrified expression from my men, but instead they understood. "Right; brace for decompression!" he yelled. They sealed their harnesses and prepared. Atmosphere exploded out as I jettisoned myself from the dropship, and thrust myself towards the nearest damaged Carrier. Grunts and Hunters are the only soldiers able to survive in space without equipment, as it was already built in. I got to the Carrier, but apparently my luck had run out for today; I scraped the smooth side, and flew away via its engines. I could only hope I wouldn't get rammed by anything. That would also be one of my unlucky momentsâ€¦

I awoke severalâ€¦I don't know, maybe hours later. I was actually alive. I remembered being slammed into by a Seraph fighter, and the rest was blank. Anyway, it might have been a lucky hit-and-run, because I lay in a ridge on top of a Brute-controlled Destroyer. It was bound for the religious planetoid city as a result of heavy damage. "This ought to be fun." I muttered to myself as the ship

approached Port 0378 on the lower half of High Charity. I wished I could go in guns blazing the second we docked, but I had to keep a low profile. If I was to secure a TAC. System data drive INTACT, I would actually have to creep around and avoid contact. What a pain. I slipped in through an air vent, not an easy feat when you're a Hunter—it took a good half hour too, but I did it. The second I had stepped in, I was stormed by two packs of Brutes. Six were carrying the standard Brute Shot, two had Carbines, and one had a human Shotgun. I fell of a Shotgun wound, but not before catching the Captain in the Groin. He fell, and I struck him down again. They jumped me, so I tossed a plasma grenade randomly and clipped it to the face of the nearest by accident. It got messy from there.

"Take him down!" Garjk' screamed to his Brutes, but the Hunter just kept plowing through. '_I should have expected this—the Hierarchs! He's after the TAC. System so he can run a Destroyer and take out the Prophets. I won't let this be so_' he thought as he fired his Brute Shot. And then, out of pure luck, he struck the Hunter right in the stomach. It dropped to the ground, lifeless. "We actually did it— I mean, we did it perfectly. Secure that body and take it to the detention center. We'll interrogate him later." He said. "Of course, Commander Garjk'!" his soldiers replied, and they transported the body through the ship to question it.

'_Uhhh—where—where am I? How did I get—the Brutes! I must be in a detention center.' _ Was the thought that ran through my mind. Instead of the usual bars, I was locked in by massive steel doors, and they had policed the shield and cannon from my unconscious body. My only option was to ram through with my body, but how many were on the outside? I had no time to think about it, my only concern was the TAC. System. I made numerous attempts, but none made a dent

in the two meter thick wall. If only I had a thinner wall, I—of course! That would be my only chance out, and I'd have to make it quick before I got grenaded again.

"Status on our model prisoner?" the Brute Commander asked his minions. "Commander Garjk'! He made a few attempts to break out, but that cell is completely reinforced! Well, except for—the—bottom—" Was what he squeezed out after realizing what the Hunter could do. "Open it! NOW!" Garjk' yelled, and they punched it the authorization codes. Even as the doors began to open, they heard a sickening thud and felt a shudder in the ground beneath them. "It's empty, sir!" his commanding officer stated. "Give the red alert to the lower decks. Seal anything that could be used for an escape." Garjk' ordered. They left, but there was more to be seen; if they had inspected that cell, they would've noticed the gaping hole in the _side_. And the Hunter Klez broke through the thin bars of the next cell.

"Status, Commander?" Frenirn inquired over a private COM channel. "I'm fine, although I was found out and captured." Klez replied. "Captured?! They know we here!" the Grunt screamed, but Klez calmed him. "No, they have the wrong impression of where I am, and now I can practically walk to the Command Center undetected." he replied. "Well, whatever you do, be ready for pickup. Frenirn out!" he said before closing the channel. Klez wished he could walk anywhere, but those words had only been meant to stop Frenirn from panicking. I truth, it was the exact opposite.

Depending on circumstances, this could be either a good or bad thing: I was at the entrance to the control room, surrounded by Jackals, Brutes, and Drones. It was good because it meant I was finally to the objective, and obviously bad because I was surrounded. Just then, the Brute Commander Garjk' entered the room. "You've come a long way, but you will die here. There are hundreds of my soldiers on board this scrap heap, and you can't take them all on alone." He snarled, and his men grunted their agreement before closing in on me. "Oh, I can assure you that he's not alone." The Commander said as he waltzed into the room, along with an armada's worth of Elites and Grunts. And there, among the crowd, was Karn! "Looks like you finally got what I meant! Now let us eradicate these Brutes and take High Charity!" he yelled. What I consider as the greatest battle in my life began there. Two armies charged each other, and battle cries filled the air. Weapons fire dominated the air around us, and it was every man for himself.

"Hall breach: an Elite controlled vessel is plowing through the upper decks toward the control room!" a voice alerted over the ship COM. Frenirn's Phantom blasted through the wall right into the fray. "Hunters, assemble into a defensive position!" I ordered to my entire race in the room. We formed a defensive line before the Phantom, allowing the High Commander time to secure the TAC. System data drive. I swung my shield and crushed a Jackal in the forehead, which shattered on impact. I fired on the next three packs, and charged them. Four of my Hunters, and then myself, fell to the ground from Beam Rifle shots in our necks. I was wide awake, but paralyzed. I was actually scared; not for myself, but for all of my comrades. I felt like I was letting them down. I struggled, and stood, but was overwhelmed by the Drones. They swarmed through the air, taking shots at anyone foolish enough to stand around and let them. Rage filled me, all of us, and we began tearing them apart. literally. We grabbed nearby Drones and ripped their wings off before stomping them into the ground. I smashed Jackals in the legs and tossed them over the edge of the platform, and shot Brutes in the face with my cannon. Dead bodies littered the ground and amongst them were many that had served in the Honor Guard before the recommissioning. The Brute Commander stood among those still fighting, and it was time for revenge.

I charged the beast with every bit of strength I could muster. I tackled him, and began carving his body with my cannon fire. He threw me off and proceeded to slice my stomach with the bayonet of his weapon of choice. I spun and ran him into a wall with my spikes extended, but not before he stuck me with a plasma grenade. It exploded on my chest, stunning me to the core. He took the opportunity to shoot at my exposed spots with the Carbine, but instead Karn charged in and took the shots with his armor. "Forerunners be praised! Once again we fight to slay the blasphemers!" Karn said, as though nothing before had happened. I recovered from the grenade, and we fired at the vile monster at will. He was thrust through the steel of the door, where the bridge officers panicked. The High Commander was infiltrating the authorization codes to release the TAC. System, but that Brute had other things in mind; he activated the self-destruct code, and all systems on the ship immediately stopped. "Lets see you try to use it now." He said as he gave the order to seal all of the decks. "Those will be your last words, Brute." I said to him, and brought my boot down on his skull.

"We can still use the Phantom to escape!" The Commander stated. "Yes," I replied, "but first we must solve how to penetrate the seals." We had a decision to make, and we finally took the last option; the ship would self-destruct in fifteen minutes, so the Hunters would stay behind and cut an exit. Myself included. What awaited us was something we had never expected.

I will write shortly! I may not own Halo, but I own this story, and it's GOOD, so take that Bungie! Also, disregard the end of the last chapter. I misread the Trial package, and I can write until the 31st of January. So there will be more to come. READ IT!

14. Above and Beyond

The time has come! The 14th chapter of Forsaken! The ultimate battle awaitsâ€|

Chapter 14, "Above and Beyondâ€|".

"Get in, man!" Johnson ordered. The small human ship didn't look big enough, and yet it had just pierced the hull of the Destroyer. "Pile in! Go, go, go!" I shoved myself in the back, and the hatch closed. The dropship rumbled to life, and we were off. "2 minutes until self-destruct!" Frenirn warned. We hadn't cleared the range of the explosion yet, and we were losing time. Just then, High Charity came into view. Amidst the chaos, our target was still very much intact, and I intended to board it. "Take us there!" I demanded. "Are you nuts! Hell, I ain't about to-"he was cut off by the good sergeant. "You heard'em! Go!" he commanded. "â€|Alright, sir!" he replied, albeit a little nervously, and we were off. The ships tiny guns fired at the debris and fighters in our path. We were on a collision course with High Charity, and the ship bay was in view. As the bay became larger as we closed in, I wondered what awaited us inside. And I was about to get my answer.

The horrid scream of the parasite echoed through the bay as we crashed. In almost an instant, we were surrounded by hundreds of Flood, not counting the swarms of Infection Forms scattered about. "No, it's the Flood again!" Johnson yelled as he opened fire on them, and we followed suit. "I don't think we'll have to do anything hereâ€|" I warned. "Take cover!" and as I ordered, the Destroyer erupted into a firestorm. Pieces of the ship impacted High Charity, and the Flood advancing on us were incinerated, as well as some of our own. "No time to mourn, we must push through." I said, perhaps a little coldly. The first door we entered led to a room filled with Jackals. They only took a minute or two to defeat, but every second counted now. We met up with reinforcements on one of the towers, and proceeded as planned, that is, until we noticed a rather large part of High Charity's interior was missing; the massive ship in the middle. And in its place, a massive, rottingâ€|beastâ€|! Was thatâ€|was that the overlord of the Flood! It all makes sense now, the Flood invasion, the absence of the Prophets; it was all planned by that monstrosity. "We have to stay." I demanded. "The heck you talkin' about! We've come too far!" Johnson remarked. "Behold the true parasite, the true Flood." I pointed in the direction of thatâ€|_thing_, and he saw for himself the virulent beast. "Sweet Mary Mother of Godâ€|" was the best he could manage. "That is the root of everything to date, I'd assume. We must destroy it." "â€|What about that Prophet?" he asked. "I'm sure the Demon will do something

about it." I harshly replied, remembering my comrades that had fallen at his hand.

"A raggedy group of veterans vs. a huge tentacled monster and its army of walkin' horrorsâ€¦I like those odds!" he said with a grin. "No, of course not! Why don't we have a PARTY WHILE WE'RE AT IT! We can't fight them all!" I answered, knowing full well what would happen if the Flood hosts knew we were after their lord and master. "Well, I don't know about you, but I'm in!" one of his marines answered, anticipation thick in his voice. "Yeah, TAKIN' the fight to those mutha's for once!" another answered. "Well, you in, or are ya' yellow?" the Sergeant asked. "â€¦Your tenacity for doing the impossible is infectious. Yes, I'll fight." I simply replied. "Man, why you gotta be so formal all the time for?" he mumbled as a pack of Brutes charged through the next door. But something was wrong. The Brutes were all Captains, and they were being ledâ€¦by Tarturus! "Thought I'd fallen at your hands! You, and the rest of your race, are finished!" He roared as his warriors opened fire on us, and from behind the Flood erupted through the platform like it was paper. "Things're lookin' to get rough. You up to it?" he asked while putting one of those brown sticks in his mouth. "Would I not be?" I gave some of my own dry wit, and we began, albeit something was terribly wrong here; the Flood weren't fighting us, they were supporting us! The monsters took up a defensive line around us and began throwing themselves at the Brutes. "I'd take this as an invite, but I'm too suspicious." I managed to say. "Not much we can do but keep goin'." A marine, Master Sergeant Jack Hill, suggested. We ran ahead as the Brutes fell before the Flood.

The Flood were joining our merry little band all along the way to that abomination. And the bestâ€¦err; good part about it was that they were bringing up our defense. We entered the main city. Surrounded by the tall buildings and signs and Brutes in it, I didn't have the slightest clue as to how to avoid all the problems at hand. "No choice. CHARGE!" Johnson ordered. I got in my hits, firing on the far Jackals and crushing the near. M. Sergeant Hill picked up one of those "launchers" from a fallen Flood host and fired it twice. It took out 3 Brutes per shot, leaving the others to go berserk. The Flood Infection Forms had long since taken both the Brutes' and our soldiers' bodies into their collective and picked up any weapon at hand. Our efforts would pale in comparison before the sight ahead of us: a massive tentacle plowing through the ground, crushing Brutes and Jackals while swinging at Drones. "So that's itâ€¦" Hill said as the buildings in front of us came down to revealâ€¦â€¦â€¦

I don't own Halo. But none of you do either, so SHAFT! Anyway, RR!

15. Sacred Battle

I realize I may have waited a while to postâ€¦anyway, I do not hold ownership to Halo and/or Halo 2.

Chapter 15 "Sacred Battle".

â€¦To reveal a grotesque beast of unprecedented size. We were at the heart of the Flood.

"Arrogant creatures, you shall die instantaneously, while we suffer

the progress of your transcendences!" the beast bellowed, and its voice seemed to echo throughout the High Charity. After its declaration, it took the time to look down upon us. "Filthy parasite, you dare defile our grand monument!" I demanded, although it didn't seem to notice. "What are you, to be making demands of me? I am the result of your very sins." It replied. "Listen, I don't know what you really are, where you came from, or what you're doin', but we ain't about to stand around and let ya' do it. Ante up, Klez; we've got ourselves a virus to wipe out!" Johnson interjected. We were already under attack, as the Flood who had helped us reach this ungodly horror had turned against us. "Fire at will! Grenade the far ones!" Karn ordered. "I'll take up the rear, you distract them." Johnson suggested. "â€|Rightâ€|" I gave him a look, as much as that says for a Hunter, and went offâ€|

I remember being swept away by the beast's tentacle, and was thrown into a crowd of Flood. The foolish creatures attempted to rush me, which ended with a plasma shot from my cannon. Johnson, meanwhile, was busy readying a "Havoc Nuclear Mine" to plant at the base of the "Grave mind", as my men were beginning to call it. _He'd better hurry, or I'll have to take them all onâ€|_ I imagined, figuring that myself against the Flood army was bad enough. I flung myself into the onslaught, beating them down with my shield and firing my cannon. As one readied and jumped for my back, I thrust the armored spikes on my back into it. The humans were holding there ground, and the Sergeant was almost ready by the look of anxiety on him. A nuclear mineâ€|whatever it was, we hoped it would dislodge the creature.

"I'm ready over here. Just grab their attention while I plant it!" Johnson barked. The humans formed up along my right side, my own forces at the left. We had gradually moved in towards the Grave mind, and were preparing to strike it when the order came; "Get outta here! It's gonna blow!" It was a mad dash for the nearest path through the monsters, and we didn't have too much time from the panic among the humans. The Hunters were leading for a change, and we made quick work of the opposition. I especially took the time to brutally slay several of them, knocking them down and crushing them with a stomp. We were at a generous distance when a flash illuminated the entire Inner City. Before we could move any further, the shockwave did it for us, right into a building.

I awoke at was presumable to be a bad moment. It didn't feel right when I tried to move, so I stopped. At least nothing was trying to kill me at the moment. I was finally able to get up a moment later, but I didn't like what I saw. A massive hole in the top of the High Charity encompassed most of it, and there was no movement. No Flood, no Gravemind, nothing. The humans arose from the ashes, breathing apparatuses adorned. "Damn I'm good." Johnson gloated. The marines began chattering, but a feeling didn't leave meâ€|a feeling of dread. My instincts seemed wrong, but that changed when a half-melted tentacle came up from beneath us, and we were airborne for a few seconds before making a hard landing on an underground platform. Apparently this wasn't over by a long shot.

Sorry, you guys! I broke my arm, and now I have carpal tunnel from writing this much in just 3 days. RR! AGH!

I have returned to stay, at least I hope so. We're nearing the climax of this story, so give me suggestions along the way.

Chapter 16, "The Greatest Warship".

"You creatures are ignorant, to think I will die so soon." The Gravemind bellowed as it flung its tentacles at us. Our numbers diminished, and we weren't in a very good situation regarding our escape, not to mention this beast. The Flood had no doubt taken control of our ships already, and would sooner or later learn how to initiate the Slipstream Drive. We would need to find a ship capable of space travel soon. "I haven't got any ideas, you?" Sergeant Johnson asked. "None whatsoever. If we can make it to the South Tower, we'll reach a docking bay. I don't know if there will be any operable ships, but it's the best option." I replied, charging my cannon. And so we made a mad dash, hiding and firing at Flood hosts whenever possible. It was about 100 kilometers to that tower, and that would be without interferenceâ€¦

After hours of guerilla tactics, we were coming up on the structure. I vaguely remembered hearing about a powerful Omega Class Cruiser, but pushed the thought aside â€" no doubt those arrogant "Prophets" had it at Earth. Those ungodly beasts came at us, one after another. All forms suddenly left us and converged at the base of the tower. As my Elites â€" yes, _my _Elites, broke out their Swords and Fuel Rod Guns, I thrust my spikes and charged my particle cannon. _Where is the Gravemind? It stopped attacking hours agoâ€¦ _I pondered as we threw ourselves at the incoming horde. It dawned on me, albeit too late to do anything about it, as its "arms" erupted from the ground behind the army. The rest soon followed mouth agape at us as it had been before. I fired, to no avail. "Warriors, prepare for combat! Fire on my mark into the center of that swarm, and not a moment later!" I ordered.

My plan worked. The combination of their weight, the stress already on the floor, and our plasma weapon's fire combined sent the creatures into oblivion. That left the greatest parasite. "The best we can do is hide from it, and enter the tower." I informed Johnson. "Whatever works for you, but I don't hide from any damned head on tentacles!" he replied, gung-ho about taking it out. "We have no means to fight it! We have to find a ship, leave this god forsaken place, and find survivors!" I ordered. He paused, and then resigned. "Alright, but how the hell are we gonna make it past that thing without gettin' smashed?" he asked. "Simple; we create a diversion." I replied.

The Gravemind turned to see a pair of Elites running the gauntlet. _If this doesn't work, nothing will._ I worried as they ran. They drew attention from everything in the vicinity of the Gravemind, and even the aforementioned beast attacked. We quickly ran toward the tower grav lift, and boarded it. When we reached the top, after about 15 minutes, I bowed to honor their sacrificeâ€¦ and was caught off guard when they arrived on the lift; although they were severely wounded. I could immediately tell that one had a broken arm and fractured skull, but he managed to limp to us. The other's arm was missing altogether, and it was apparent that his shield generator didn't work anymore. A liability at this point. "Commander, I want you in the center of our contingent; we can't risk losing you." I instructed him. "Yes, Major!" he replied. I received the promotion

for conduct above and beyond the call of duty. And I would make good on my worthiness as we transgressed through the tower to reach the bay.

When we reached the doors to the bay, our bad fortune reared its ugly head. They had been burnt shut. I called upon two of my species, and we proceeded to ram it. Nothing. We charged our cannons, and fired a salvo into the center. No effect. Blasted Brutes. I figured as we continued. It took a good ten minutes to break through. What awaited us struck us speechless.

There, in the center of the bay, was an Omega Class Cruiser. Equipped with two shield generators, fine-tuned Slipstream Drive, armed to the core with weapons, and a streamlined design fitting of the ship. She was also about the size of an Earth city.

We were staring at the Fleet Capitol Ship Manifest Destiny.

To be continued in Ch. 17. I bid you adieu for now.

17. The Decisive Battle, Pt 1

Continuing from Ch. 16.

Chapter 17, "The Deciding Battle: Part 1".

We were staring at the Fleet Capitol Ship Manifest Destiny.

"It's actually here! And intact from those Flood!" I unconsciously said as we began the run for it. If we could commandeer that ship, we could take it back to Halo and pick up the survivors. "When we get down there, there's a couple of people I wanna pick up. Got it?" Johnson asked, in an orderly form. "Of course, but that depends on if we get thereâ€|" I replied, drifting off as I wondered what awaited us on the ship, and on Halo. We neared the port opening that would allow us access to the ship, and found it burnt shut as well. "Blast the Brutes!" the Commander wailed. I looked upon the hasty and generally sloppy work. "No, not Brutes. Jackals or Drones didn't do this either. That leaves one opponentâ€|" I informed them wearily, knowing what was probably standing right behind that door. "I'll take a squad in, Chief. Just give me the order." Lieutenant Potter volunteered. "Negative, lieutenant. Commander, I'll take in a force and reconnoiter the area and then give the signal when it's clear." I replied to both. "Given that we have advanced shielding, we should be able to fair better." I finished as I began firing at the weak door.

It only took a few minutes for us to â€|override the locks. We burst in, and got our just desserts; a swarm of Combat Forms launched into the air, intent on spilling our blood. "Align fire on point targets! Finish the rear with grenades, and flank any survivors!" I ordered, and charged. I was forced forward when an unseen Carrier Form detonated behind me. My worst nightmare befell me as a result; an Infection Form began burying its tentacles into my back. Its numerous projections could easily override the autonomous actions of my structure, if it could locate my nervous vector, and would take me. I couldn't reach around, and I was forced to become what I truly was; my body literally burst into hundreds of worm-like creatures, my essence essentially gone for the moment (no pun intended). "What in

god's name was that?" Johnson wailed, killing an Elite Combat Form. It would take several hours to properly re-manifest myself into the Hunter Form. Another setback in an already bad situation.

It was effectively night on the High Charity as it passed into the shadow of Threshold. Prime hours for the Flood to muster their forces for another assault. I still had to reform my left arm, as well. Another half hour to give the beasts. "Sergeant, I want you to take a strike force deeper into the ship. If at all possible, locate the Command Center. It'll be towards the inside of the ship." I informed him, knowing that humans had their control areas nestled right at the prow. "High Commander, what's our move after we clear the system?" I asked our leader, who'd remained particularly silent. And silent he remained, giving only a hand signal towards the aft section? Perhaps the engines? Odd. I wouldn't question it, though. He led me, the Commander, and several other Elites and Marines away from the area. I was completing my reconstruction when we were attacked by Brutes.

The High Commander sprung into action; into the air, almost like NO. I dismissed the thought immediately. He had been with us since the landing on Halo. Prior to that, but, he had spoken to us, led us against them. It couldn't have been a ploy. If the Gravemind could manipulate hosts to its will, then it was ultimately true. And I knew what I would be expected to do. Before I could act, however, he turned on us. He plunged his sword into the Commander, killing him immediately. Infuriated, I punched him into the wall, and leveled my cannon at his face. "None shall fall to the Parasite under my watch again." I angrily shouted, and fired. Green gore and liquefied brain sprayed the walls. My deed done, I wondered if anything had happened to the others. Two Marines lay dead, as well as the Elites. I felt responsible somehow as I backtracked to the group.

"Klez! We found the Control Room, and we're keeping our new friends out until you get here! Get down here double-time!" Johnson called over the COM. The lights dimmed, and went out. Excellent. This was actually an edge; our home world was pitch-black, and we developed incredible night vision. I couldn't say the same for the humans, though; they have terrible sight in the dark, with exception to the Demon SPARTAN, he was known as. I navigated the tight hallways and catacombs of the ship. I was proceeding well, but at this rate, I would be too late to do anything. I started a brisk sprint; the human rate of running. I didn't bother to let doors open, and plowed through towards my objective.

The muffled sound of gunfire resonating through the hall told me I'd made it in time to save whoever was left. Surprisingly, the Humans had held their own up to this point. The elongated Command Center denoted the technicality of the Cruiser; a pain in the neck. We didn't have the personnel, or an A.I., to take on the numerous processes affiliated here. "Lt. Potter! Ready all personnel to man priority stations. Minor," I motioned to one of the lesser ranking Elites, "You have experience with piloting these, so you're the Temporary Shipmaster." I informed him, beating down a Combat form and spinning to take down a Jackal. "Yes, Major!" he replied enthusiastically. Everyone jumped to their stations, and we prepped the ship for departure.

A Loyalist battle group awaited us.

I will continue soon in Pt. 2!

18. The Decisive Battle, Pt 2

Here comes the first massive battle in this 3-part set of chapters, so LOVE IT!

Chapter 18, "The Deciding Battle: Part 2".

A Loyalist battle group awaited us. Our portly vessel was just beginning its starting sequences when they charged their lateral cannons for a torpedo barrage. "Override safeties on the engines: Full Burn out of the bay!" Minor 'Sakamee ordered to Lt. Potter. "But that'll tear her up! We wouldn't survive-"he protested, but Johnson cut him off, "Do it Marine!" he instructed. "Y-Yes, sirs!" he replied, and hastily punched in the codes that lay out before him. "Launch on my mark, Lt." 'Sakamee informed him, waiting for the small, vital window to pull it off. "3â€|2â€|1â€|_Mark_!" 'Sakamee bellowed. Potter thrust the engines; a terrible shockwave rattled the ship as it burst from the ship bay, just as the battle group's torpedoes fired.

"Bring us about! Input commands to the Shield Generator to focus the field of strength on the starboard side!" 'Sakamee ordered. I was on WepOps, and charged the turrets on the aforementioned side of the ship. _'A funeral pyreâ€|'_ _I thought malevolently as I prepared to fire them. Their torpedoes slammed into the focused shield, depleting about three-fourths of its power. That left me the opportunity to strike. From nowhere, another salvo hit us at port. With shields on starboard, the hull took the full brunt, and atmosphere erupted from several decks of the ship. "Redirect shields to full coverage! Divert half power from weapons, and prepare for evasive maneuvers!" 'Sakamee growled. The shields slowly slipped back around the ship as we listed to starboard. Fortunately, we got our first good break in an eternity; a Destroyer shot six torpedoes through a single ship, and a fleet of Seraph fighters swarmed from a Carrier. They were friendly contacts.

"Klez, give me a firing solution! Karn, bring us to course six zero nine!" 'Sakamee ordered. "We'll have sufficient power to fire torpedoes in five minutes." I replied, whilst Karn directed the ship to its new course. "No time! I want those launched NOW!" the Minor shouted. Had this been routine, I'd have put him in his place; I was in command of the overall operation, but I realized what he wanted to do. "Yes. Firing now." I answered steadily. The group was now disconcerted between the three ships taking them out. "Alright, that was the easy part," 'Sakamee began, as our torpedoes impacted with a weakened Carrier, and reeled in disarray, "we're going after the tough one now: there, in the back. That's an Alpha Class Sniper Ship. The _Black Phantasm_, I believe. It poses the greatest threat, so it's our primary target." He instructed. Almost as if it was listening, and it probably _was_, the ship began to retreat.

"Bring us to bear! Track that ship through SlipSpace!" 'Sakamee ordered. With our new friends keeping the battle group at bay, we plotted a course for the stealth ship's Slipstream vector. A large hole appeared before the nose of the Cruiser, and we shot into the Slipstream. "It has a course plotted for these coordinates, Major.

Where is this?" Lt. Potter asked. "Here, let me see that," I asked, and took a good look at it, "this is the Sol system. And that meansâ€¦Earth." I replied. "ETA to Sol system in twelve hours." Karn announced. "I'll be God damned. They're gonna snipe us outta the sky and glass it!" Potter grumbled. "No, they won't. At least not all of it," Johnson stated matter-of-factly, "they're gonna go for the Ark. Whatever that is. We don't have too much intel right now. And the guy who gave us the info is back on Delta Halo." He grunted. "Sir, we're receiving a signal from another ship. It's the _Purity of Spirit_! They say they have some allies to deliver to us, as well as some of the good Sergeant's friends." Karn informed us.

Linking up with a ship in SlipSpace was hard enough, but making a ship-to-ship personnel transfer was unheard of. Then again, so was everything else up to this point. "We cannot break our course with the _Phantasm_! If we do, we'll almost definitely be too late to take it out before it deals heavy damage to the Fleet." 'Sakamee defied. "If we plot a planet-side intercept with the _Phantasm_ at Earth, we can trap it between the fleets. We just need to confirm with the UNSC, or whatever you call your organization. In the mean time, we'll drop out of the Stream and rendezvous with the _Spirit_." Answered a voice from the doorway. We turned to see the legend himself: Special Operations Commander Fara 'Ralkamee, a.k.a. "Half-Jaw" replied to 'Sakamee. "Sir!" 'Sakamee snapped to attention, "With all do respect, we'll lose the only chance we have to save the Fleet at Earth!" he argued. "Not with the friends we'll be picking up." Half-Jaw replied frighteningly calmly.

"If I may interrupt," I announced, "we still have some unwelcome guests aboard this vessel. What of them?" I inquired. "Isn't it obvious? We fry'em!" Johnson replied. A grunt of agreement came from the marines, and I decided it was also for the best. "Alright then. Johnson, take a platoon through the bow of the ship. I'll take a team to the stern. After we've cleared them out, we'll rendezvous back here. Is that fine with you?" I suggested. "I'm fine with it. Potter, you and a couple others are with me! Do whatever ya want from here, Klez." Johnson ordered, and gave a salute to all of us. We returned it. "Alright, 'Sakamee. You, and a few other Elites, are coming with me. We'll do what we can and return here before we reach the _Spirit_." I ordered, and everyone prepared for the battles to comeâ€¦

Here is Pt. 2. Pt. 3 will be up soon, so don't fret.

19. The Decisive Battle: Finale'

Things are back on track, after many months. :3 I'm happy to announce new updates here. Enjoy!

Chapter 19, "The Decisive Battle: Finale"

The pearlescent walls of this ship would be a comforting visual, if not for the blood spatter and flood infestation we encountered in the depths of the ship. Having made our to the aft end of the Cruiser, we encountered little resistance from the Flood. A few groups, but nothing like we'd expected. As we continued on, however, 'Sakamee was becoming increasingly arrogant. Having not had much real combat experience as a Shipmaster, he believed this was all the Flood could muster. Not long after that, he would learn the truth. "You're

certain there're still Flood back here? We could've returned to the bridge by now..." 'Sakamee complained. "You'll have patience, unless you want to return on your own." I recoiled. With a snort, he dropped the argument. An echo of a scream alerted us to another small band of vile creatures. The only thing wrong with it was that this howl seemed to emanate from much farther into the ship..._behind_ us. I paid no mind, as these beasts are clever at hiding themselves. _'Perhaps it's a larger band? We'd have seen it, though...but it's no cause for concern'_ I myself thought rather ignorantly. To that extent, I only became worried when the roar was much louder now, closer, and moving in our direction. The metal plates of the floor started to clamor; something normally only made possible by Hunters or massive Brutes. "Tactical positions. Stake a corner and keep an eye out for anything out of the ordinary." I commanded. The Elites complied, with Grunts falling in behind them. The shaking continued for some time, then abruptly stopped. "...Perhaps it's gone? We should cont-" 'Sakamee began to utter before a fearsome display occurred; several spiked tentacles drove through his chest and head, killing him instantly. The monster revealed itself, a nightmarish, titanic juggernaut composed of decaying flesh and distorted cries. I moved to attack, but was knocked back as it threw the dead body of my comrade. "By the Rings, what is that?" an Elite, 'Maumee questioned. "Whatever it is, it's made of Flood, and that means it dies." I responded, raising my cannon. As I fired, the beast charged me. It had to have stood 13 feet, and it would have, if not for the confined walls of the hall. An immense arm reached to strike me as it had 'Sakamee, but I managed to fire in time to stop its advance. To my horror, however, the plasma sheared off a layer of flesh that began to regenerate. Clearly, we were up against something never before encountered in the Flood arsenal.

Flailing violently, the creature drove back any direct physical attempts to fight it. 'Maumee managed to plant a grenade on what was universally decided to be its face...to little effect. At that, it turned on him. In a meaningless attempt, I rammed the Juggernaut in the back, and it stumbled. But it reacted quickly, and grabbed me by the head. It swung me into the wall with such force that I breached it, and half of me ended up out the other wall. Not only did this disorient me, it severely damaged my armor, with several sections crumple, and another falling to the ground with a crack against the metal. It pulled me from the wrecked wall, and would have thrown me some distance, if not for Karn's intervention. My brother crashed into the back of it, and began to melee it with his shield. This took the monster's attention from me, but focused its rage on Karn. It took him in both of its malformed hands and catapulted him nearly 7 yards down the hall, where he skidded to a halt near the exit, motionless. Enraged, I ran it through with my spikes, but again the damage was minimal to this demon. For a half-second, my mind flashed back to the Demon, the Master Chief, and how they seemed to be alike in that matter. That gave me all the more motivation to defeat it now. As the battle continued, the exit opened, revealing a group of bloodthirsty Combat Forms. "Gah, the last thing we need." Frenirn grunted, firing at the small Infection forms that burst through as well. "We can't handle a group that big, much less _this_ thing. Should we retreat?" 'Maumee asked. I hesitated, but agreed. This was too much for anything less than a Drinol to handle. With that, we fought our way to the exit. The Juggernaut began after us, when Frenirn stopped and started backward. "Are you mad, what're you doing? You'll get yourself killed, you fool!" I cried as he stayed behind. "You protect me in the past, so isn't it only right I protect

you?" he made his point as he fired at it. Before I could start again, the beast stopped to attack him, instead of us. We rushed through the exit, and I locked it. I acknowledged his noble sacrifice with a silent prayer, before we ran back the way we came. "Shouldn't we have waited...?" 'Maumee asked, a warrior's pride slightly injured by the need to flee. "We couldn't have won, and that Grunt assured our escape. Its better that we live to fight. 'Sakamee and Frenirn's sacrifices are worth something..." I answered. That would indeed be the last of one of my few friends, and we made the hard way back to the bridge.

When we arrived back, Johnson's group was still at business. "Good God, what the hell happened to you people?" Sergeant Hill was aghast. Indeed, we suffered grievous wounds in the battle: 'Maumee lost his right eye and forearm, the latter in the attempt to plant the grenade; I had lost part of my armor, and orange blood spilled from the mangled plates covering my back. We'd managed to save Karn through all of the chaos, but he was unconscious. "We encountered a Flood Juggernaut. I don't believe either of our races have ever encountered it, and we hadn't the resources to have a delusion of defeating it." I explained the events of the bloody skirmish to him. He let out a low whistle. "So wait, you mean to say...that this thing's still running amok?" he asked nervously. "I'm afraid so. 'Sakamee and Frenirn were lost in the battle, and I'd have undoubtedly been a casualty if not for Karn." I glanced at my injured brother. "Reckon it'd be a good idea to seal off the backdoors?" He questioned. "Indeed. Please relay that to the Commander." I requested, and he hurried to do so. Observing the bridge, the Humans had done nice work in fixing hardware, but I wasn't surprised at the lack of work on the control panels. After all, there weren't many Elites left who knew how the controls for the ship worked, and that situation wasn't helped with the loss of 'Sakamee. Luckily, Commander 'Ralkamee was now onboard, and so he would know how to pilot the flagship. At that time, the momentary peace was ended by a transmission from Johnson. _"This's Johnson, Bridge. We've got a pretty bad situation here, so I'll keep it short: We're trapped in the very front of this damn ship, with a big Flood bastard nailin' us. Was hopin' you guys could get your lazy asses up here and help!"_ and with that, it ended. "Goddamn, there's _two_ of these things now?" came the anxious, exasperated voice of Hill. I couldn't say I blamed him, either. Before any words were needed, 'Maumee and I were already setting up to leave. "Hey, wait a minute!" another Marine called before we left. His tag read "Ezekiel", and the symbols on his arm were supposed to mark him as some kind of low-ranking officer. "Corporal Lance Ezekiel, sir! I recommend you take this baby," he said, producing a large sphere. "If worse comes to worse in there, you can use this thing. Course, it'd be a good idea to get a good distance away before she goes off." He handed it to 'Maumee, who obviously had more dexterity than I did. He saluted, and we acknowledged it with a nod. With that, we left toward the prow, dreading another encounter with the Juggernaut.

The journey to the front end of the ship was considerably harder than our pervious expedition, in that there were far more Flood in tighter spaces. However, we managed to fight our way through. It took several hours, as did the search of the stern, and by this time we were beginning to doubt there'd be anyone left to save when we got there. But I pushed such worries aside; the Humans were certainly resourceful and more importantly, persistent. They'd survive until we could reach them. The lighting and electronics at this end were

damaged from some earlier escapade, no doubt Johnson's work, and unworkable doors were a constant hindrance. Soon, though, we heard the telltale snarls and the shaking ground of the Juggernaut. As we entered the very last section, it was a sight to behold; the demon writhing in agony as Potter blew a large section of it off with the same large bullet that decommissioned me in my battle with the Master Chief. "'Bout damn time you showed up! We were startin' to think you'd be too yellow to show up." Johnson greeted. "I'm not sure what our color has to do with it, but we've fought this thing before." I answered bluntly. As I finished my sentence, the beast regained a fighting stance and smashed several Marines out of its way toward us. Before I could react, I was kicked to the ground by the beast. It began mauling the mangled parts of my armor, and its sheer strength overwhelmed me. I regret that I was helpless to do anything but try and force it away. It ripped the front of my chest section off, but another explosion tore its back open. It recoiled, emitting a high-pitched scream as it turned on those shooting it. 'Maumee wielded a Fuel Rod Gun against it, and that seemed to have the best effect. I managed to get a shot out of my own cannon, and the result was more devastating than before. That didn't alleviate the situation, unfortunately, and it still rampaged through our ranks. "Damn, ain't there anything that'll work on this thing? We've used rockets, grenades, everything available." Potter asked, dodging a hit from our lumbering adversary. 'Maumee took this opportunity to bring out the sphere that Ezekiel had given. "Damnit, why didn't you get this out earlier?" Johnson demanded. "What difference will it serve? What will we do, _throw_ it at the thing?" I added sardonically, not knowing this ball's use. "This's a bomb, boy! We're gonna blow that mutha sky high!" he replied. He pressed a button on its top, and held it for a few minutes before shooting the Juggernaut with a pistol. "Come and get it!" he bellowed. The beast came for him, and he threw it at the monster's deformed face. It stuck in the weak, rotting matter, and it tried to remove it. "Shit! Get outta the room!" Potter yelled. Several of us exited through the door, while a few remaining Humans took shelter behind debris.

A fantastic explosion rocked the area. When we reentered to check the damage, pieces of it littered the room. "Well, I think that about sums things up. Don't you?" Potter asked. I nodded in agreement, noting the relief they all held in this victory. I'd be out of work for a while, at the loss of my armor. I managed to find the missing armor, and figured it might be salvageable. With this business done, we began back toward the control center. About halfway through the return trip, though, a shudder moved through the entire ship. Grating sounds could be heard resonating through the empty halls. "Apparently we've docked with the _Spirit_." I pointed out, and we hurried much faster to our destination. Arriving after nearly a half hour of trudging through wreckage, we entered the command center. Several more Humans and Elites were among us now, including two newcomers: a floating, lit orb, and a Human of a type which I'd only seen once before on the High Charity. This human had a weaker frame than the others and appeared to have two extra...appendages, I suppose? Johnson saluted her, so I assumed she was a higher rank. "Come here, man. This is UNSC Commander Miranda Keyes, our head officer." Johnson explained. "A pleasure. I assume you're the reinforcements we were informed about?" I inquired. "Yes, and we have more troops on the move from the other ship." Keyes answered, although this human seemed to be uncomfortable with my presence. "Our ETA to Earth is still one hour away. We've taken precautions to make sure there's no more Flood interference, so I suggest we all get some sort of rest." 'Ralkamee

advised. The Marines sounded their agreement, and I took a spot in the far corner of the room. Something gave me the distinct feeling that our arrival at Earth would be something short of welcoming...

End of Chapter 19.

So, tell me what you guys thing, R&R! By the way, I'm soon going to be reformatting the chapters to make them more readable. So look for new updates, ya hear?

End
file.